

Nor is that assumption shared by these countries themselves. They recognize that the major responsibility for bringing their economies to the stage of self-sustaining growth must be theirs. All they ask is that the international community co-operate with them in sustaining the efforts they themselves are making and in providing the climate and conditions in which they can mobilize their own resources to the most beneficial effect.

Still, it is arguable that foreign aid does involve the use of national resources -- in our case, Canadian resources -- and that these resources might be used, as a matter of first priority, to combat poverty at home before they are directed to combat poverty abroad. This is an argument which we cannot dismiss lightly, particularly when we have in mind the findings of some recent surveys into the persistence of poverty in our own country.

How do we reconcile the persistence of poverty in Canada with the provision of foreign aid? There are those who would argue that poverty is a relative concept. They would say that in any community in which there are substantial disparities of living standards those at the bottom of the scale have a claim to be regarded as falling within the poverty range. In one recent survey, for example, destitution -- that is to say, the lowest rung of the ladder of poverty -- is defined in terms of a per capita income of \$1,000 or less. If we were to take this as some sort of absolute standard, we would have to conclude that, in 1960, fifty-four countries with an aggregate population of some 1,548,000,000 or roughly 80 per cent of the total population of the free world were destitute.

When we come to consider the so-called developing countries, we find that their per capita in 1960 averaged \$130. This represented an advance of a mere \$25 over the average per capita income recorded in these countries in 1950. Over the same period the advanced countries of the free world, taken collectively, increased their per capita income from \$1,080 to \$1,410. What this means is that, over the decade as a whole, the gap in living standards between the advanced countries and the developing countries widened not only in absolute terms -- as might be expected -- but also in relative terms.

Of course, these are aggregate figures and they do not always tell the whole story. One part of the story which they do not tell is the rising pressure of population and the impact this has had on the whole development process. For it is worth keeping in mind that in many developing countries this pressure of population has been such that the progress made in increasing the volume of output of goods and services is barely enough to yield any improvement in living standards whatsoever.

As I said at the outset, this line of argument is one based on the relativity of poverty. It has an element of validity but it also has serious limitations. Poverty cannot be measured solely in terms of per capita income. Such a standard of measurement does not, for example, take account of what constitutes minimum levels of subsistence in different climatic conditions. Above all, it does not attempt to measure the social impact of poverty in a general environment of affluence, which is the situation we confront in Canada and other advanced countries and which is bound to make the eradication of poverty a priority objective of Government policy.